DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 098 947 IR 001 326

TITLE	Advancing Education in the Merrimack Valley.
INSTITUTION	Merrimack Education Center, Chelmsford, Mass.
PUB DATE	Nov 74
NOTE	38p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Personnel; *Annual Reports; Career Education; *Information Centers; Resource Centers; Special Education; Teachers; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	Massachusetts; *Merrimack Educational Center

ABSTRACT

Information about the programs, projects, and other activities of the Merrimack Educational Center (Massachusetts) are contained in this guide. The major projects described are the staff development of the Merrimack Valley's teachers, also the management development in the area, promoting individually guided education, providing needed information to client teachers and administrators, a development project for career and occupational education, and a dissemination project for training programs in special education. Additional information about the history, staffing, organization, and other activities of the Merrimack Educational Center is provided. (WH)

ED 098947

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Advancing Education in the Merrimack Valley

1974
Program
Information

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MERRIMACK EDUCATION CENTER

- ANDOVER
- BEDFORD
- BILLERICA
- CARLISLE
- CHELMSFORD
- DUNSTABLE-GROTON
- LAWRENCE
- LITTLETON
- LUNENBURG
- METHUEN
- NORTH ANDOVER
- NORTH MIDDLESEX REGION
- TEWKSBURY
- TYNGSBORO
- WESTFORD
- WILMINGTON
- WOBURN
- LAWRENCE REGIONAL
- GREATER LOWELL REGIONAL
- NASHOBA VALLEY TECH.
- SHAWSHEEN VALLEY VOC. TECH.

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ADVANCING EDUCATION IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY

Merrimack Education Center
Program Information - 1974

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 1973 - 1974 school year was marked by project activities that produced a strengthening of vital educational programs in the Merrimack Valley. In education, through the collaborative, we can share programs, facilities, people, equipment, information and ideas. We can plan together and we can improve together. We can cut costs and assure full use of resources. Together we have developed an educational Center to serve school districts. Supported by involved communities, the Center and its staff have striven over the past six years to be responsive to needs and to move the educational enterprise ahead.

A continuing emphasis on management education as it relates to internal organization is creating a stronger, more viable Center. What follows is a brief and informal report to our member school districts and towns concerning the past year and the coming months. Growing concern for servicing schools is reflected in the addition of new project areas. Project activities are now organized into six major areas: Staff Development; Career Education; Individualized Instruction; Special Education; Information Services; and Management Development. These project areas are all viewed as major endeavors of the Center. Each of the current projects is described in the appropriate section of this report.

These program areas add up to a perception of MEC's changing role in building a support system for comprehensive educational improvements. As an organization explicitly concerned with public schools, a major goal is to stimulate patterns of continuous self-renewal by school staffs.

The Center's commitment to educational renewal can be traced back to the earliest days of planning for collaboration. The activities described in this report, taken over the last year and projecting for the coming months, enlist greater participation of many organizations and agencies committed to educational advancement.

The Center is constantly seeking out New Ventures and emerging opportunities whereby we might make important contributions. At the same time, we expect to maintain a reasonable balance of continuous program support while responding to requests for new services.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (Continued)

In the immediate future, our goal is to refine and expand those services already under way as a means of continuous educational improvements. MEC will be able to continue its range of services, increase the size and scope of some services and maintain direct and constant accountability of the collaborative to its members. By responding to the continuing requests of educators, we can expand and grow in any direction indicated by the changing needs of local school systems. The pooling of efforts, talents, and knowledge improves educational quality and leads to the responsive and responsible use of resources.

Richard J. Lavin
Executive Director

HISTORY OF THE MERRIMACK EDUCATION CENTER

The Merrimack Education Center came into being as a result of a decision of about 35 school superintendents in the Merrimack Valley who had been meeting together informally on a regular basis for a period of some years. In 1967 these superintendents felt a mechanism was needed in the region to assist school districts in implementing change. The initial stimulus for the Center was provided by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which called for three year grants to localities across the nation to initiate innovative projects of all kinds. The Title III proposal, which was prepared and submitted in 1967, stated that the goals of the proposed Center were to study the areas of Early Childhood Education, Guidance and Career Education, and Special Education. The proposal was swiftly funded with Title III (ESEA) funds of $80,000 per year for a three year period.

In the fall of 1968 the Center, then called the "Merrimack Valley Regional Planning Center," began its operations. It was housed in a building of the Chelmsford Public Schools, with which it was legally affiliated. Twenty communities took advantage of the opportunity to join the association, and superintendents from twelve of these communities were elected to the Board of Directors of the Center.

By the end of 1971, the Center was fully launched and programs begun and strengthened in that year have continued to grow. The federal government has recognized and supported the Center with grants for funded projects. The federally funded programs lend stability to the Center; additionally, voluntary payments from the region's schools have been added. Over the years, the Center has been able to maintain the rate of assessment at 25¢ per pupil despite spiraling costs in education. Through the exchange economy model, the Center is able to give the system a choice of instituting a particular service at a particular time.

Client needs are formally assessed on an annual basis, the Center responds to these articulated needs by providing in-service courses to teachers and administrators and by making information packages available in high need areas. Information materials are also gathered from sources across the country. These include the products of the Regional Educational Laboratories and private development companies as well as information compendiums from various sources. The ERIC Clearinghouses, largely supported by the National Institute of Education, contribute extensively to the Center's capability in this area.

Need areas which have emerged as particularly salient in a substantial number of school districts or buildings are responded to with major programs. Recently, the need for development of skills, of leadership and change management for administrative personnel has been identified, resulting in in-service programs for principals and a series of conferences for superintendents. The management problem-solving studies are also in response to this emerging need.

Needs of individual educational personnel are also ascertained on a more informal basis through contacts established with Center staff. In addition, educators are asked to submit to the Center any locally developed curriculum materials which might be of interest to other practitioners in the State. A curriculum exchange bank is thus being developed which is highly relevant to the needs of the local districts.

Strong ties with local colleges and universities have enabled the Center to carry out its extensive in-service education program. Personnel from several institutions serve as instructors, while Fitchburg State College confers graduate credit on educators participating in the courses. In addition to college faculties, school personnel act as specialists, act as information consultants, or serve on an in-service commission while external resource persons serve as consultants on an ad hoc basis. This arrangement optimizes the delivery of services and products while minimizing the necessity of a Center maintenance orientation and high overhead costs.

Services and products offered by the Center stem largely from the major project areas described in this Project Information booklet. These projects, however, operate interdependently and each has the goal of satisfying client needs to the fullest extent possible by assembling and bringing to bear all available relevant resources. On the following pages, the project activities are described.

MEC ORGANIZATION CHART

1974-75

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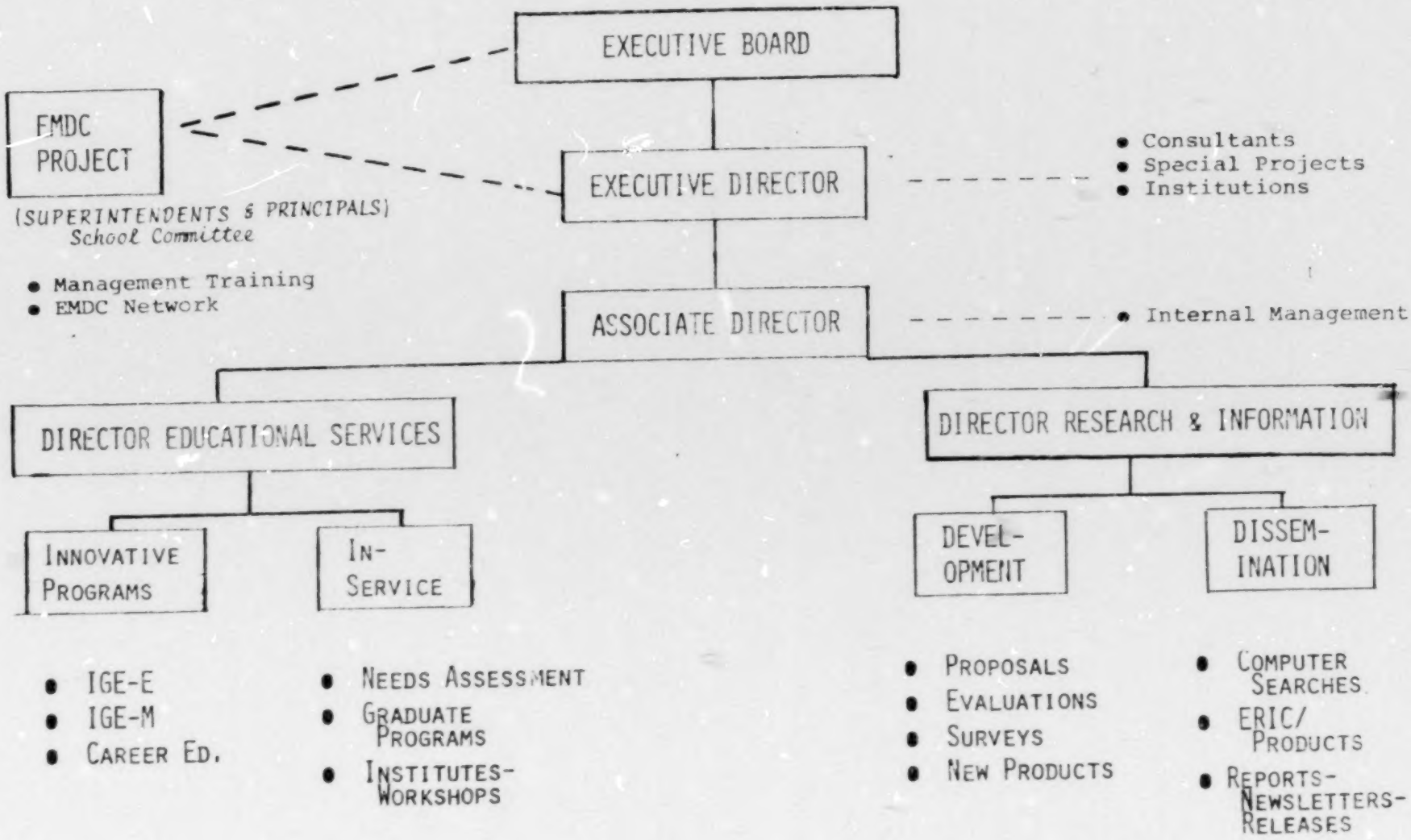

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the program is to provide staff development activities designed to meet specific identifiable needs. In support of this objective, an annual needs assessment of 5,500 teachers and administrators is taken in the Fall. Representatives from the region's school systems form an In-Service Commission and review the needs assessment data to determine the variety of programs to be offered. The information services of MEC are available to further strengthen the in-service program.

LINKAGES

The In-Service Commission meets approximately 3 times a year and is composed of representatives from member school systems.

Lois Haslam, Andover
Robert Hentz, Bedford
Paul Heffernan, Billerica
Marguerite Grant, Carlisle
Roger Smyth, Chelmsford
Robert Diamond, Groton-Dunstable
Ernest Zaik, Lawrence
Thomas Nawn, Littleton
Burton Goodrich, Lunenburg
Robert Mulloy, Methuen
Henry Shelley, No. Andover
Charles Fox, No. Middlesex
Edward Farley, Tewksbury
Benjamin Belonga, Tyngsboro
John Crisafulli, Westford
Derek Little, Wilmington
Charles Lamontagne, Woburn

The Fitchburg State College Graduate Council composed of Fitchburg State College and MEC staff, helps coordinate the MEC-Fitchburg linkage.

BUDGET

Local: 100%

Budget Estimate: $50,000

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Number & Sources of Participants

Communities	1973 Fall Session No. of Persons Participating	1974 Spring Session No. of Persons Participating	1974 Fall Session No. of Persons Participating	1974 Total No. of Persons Participating
Andover	4	10	5	15
Bedford	15	7	3	10
Billerica	29	40	23	63
Carlisle	0	2	0	2
Chelmsford	4	22	19	41
Groton-Dunstable	0	0	1	1
Lawrence	19	94	21	115
Lawrence Voc.	0	1	0	1
Littleton	1	4	1	5
Lunenburg	22	0	1	1
Methuen	42	21	47	68
Nashoba Tech.	0	1	0	1
No. Andover	11	16	55	71
No. Middlesex	1	0	3	3
Shawsheen Voc.	0	0	0	0
Tewksbury	31	48	14	62
Tyngsboro	16	14	4	18
Westford	15	45	44	89
Wilmington	8	16	1	17
Woburn	22	37	9	46
Outside Region	46	76	45	121
Totals	286	454	296	750

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT
1974-75

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
A. Assessment of Staff-Development Needs	Revised questionnaire and response system
1. Revise assessment questionnaire	5,000 teacher study forms processed
2. Assess MEC region teachers, administrators, and school committees	Local summary reports regional summary reports
3. Analyze data a) In-service Commission b) Other reports (special ed.)	
B. Program Operation	Two 3-day commission meetings
1. In-service Commission meeting	15-20 courses each semester
2. Course selection	Resource file of facilitators
3. Selection of course facilitators	Four 1-day workshops
4. Develop brochure	3-day workshops
5. Implement/monitor courses	5 programs on the in-service shelf 4 subscriptions to the in-service shelf
6. Develop in-service shelf	
7. Plan & implement workshops	16-day clinical workshop 500-600 participants in program

STAFF DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
C. Information Services	30-40 bibliographies
1. Maintain bibliography services	ERIC library
2. Deliver microfiche documents	300 fiche delivered to participants
3. Exchange successful practices	
4. Build a people resource file	
D. Linkages Between MEC Communities and Appropriate Agencies	2-4 meetings at FSC
	3 council meetings
1. FSC graduate council meetings	2 national conferences
2. Sears Roebuck project activities	
E. Evaluation	Evaluation summary
1. Mid-term and end of course evaluation	2-3 commission meetings
2. In-service commission meetings	Informal feedback
3. Informal talks with superintendents and others	

MANAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION

Management of education is emerging as a high priority area for the improvement of education. Various structures and processes are being examined in order to develop skills of leadership-management personnel.

MEC has presently 3 identified areas of action in this regard:

1. Kettering grant for the Establishment of a Management Development Center (EMDC).
2. Testing of management materials and products by MEC communities.
3. Review of the collaborative concept in education as it relates to pooling resources and shared service centers.

These study efforts are proceeding to the stage whereby problem-solving studies will be offered to member school systems. Some of the MEC superintendents have been active in the preliminary reviews of programs for implementation.

LINKAGES - (Boards and Agencies)

- C. F. Kettering Foundation, Inc. - Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A/)
- Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education (MACE) - Governor's Commission
- National Institute of Education (NIE) - Information Systems
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA) - Dallas (February, 1975)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA) - Washington (April, 1975)

BUDGET

Foundation: $20,000

Local: $ 6,000

MANAGEMENT
1974-75

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
A. Identify a Set of Competencies	Needs assessment instrument
1. Search existing instruments	5 priority studies
2. Select review panel	
3. Revise/modify instrument	
4. Administer instrument	
5. Analyze data/determine needs	
6. Prepare report	
B. Select and Implement 5 Management Studies	5 consultant reports
	Monthly superintendent seminars
1. Invite proposals from systems	
2. Select 5 problem areas	
3. Schedule studies/seminars	
4. Prepare implementation plans	
5. Conduct studies	
6. Prepare reports	

MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
C. Offer Management Training Program for Managers and Potential Manager	
1. Identify resources and tools	Resource manual
2. Search national and local practices	Planning seminar
3. Select items for inclusion	Training program design
4. Develop resource manual	
5. Conduct monthly seminars	
6. Develop case study format	
D. Evaluation	
1. Establish baseline data	
2. Evaluate problem study reports	
3. Develop new insights	
4. Write evaluation report	
5. Write third year proposal	

IGE - INDIVIDUALLY GUIDED EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

The IGE project in the Merrimack Education Center is specifically aimed at instituting change within the educational system which includes sub-systems such as the parents, teachers, and administrators as well as the general public.

In our project we are attempting to do this through a concerted effort to retrain and retool members of the sub-systems in order to best adapt to individualizing instruction through a team-building approach. Inherent within the project is a built-in diagnosis, prescription and evaluation model which is used to insure success.

Beyond this, a second objective of the IGE project is to disseminate and diffuse the IGE process throughout the State of Massachusetts.

LINKAGES - (Boards and Agencies)

- National Association of Individually Guided Education (IGE)
- Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A/) Kettering
- University of Wisconsin Research and Development Center
- Principals' Group
- Parents' Group
- HUB Committee
- State IGE Coordinating Council
  - Fitchburg State College
  - State Department of Education
  - Other Collaboratives
  - Local Education Agencies

BUDGET

Budget Allocation: $57,465

Support: Local Funds $16,500
Federal Funds $40,965

IGE - INDIVIDUALLY GUIDED EDUCATION
1974-75

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
A. Assessment of Outcomes	Listing of objectives for each school
1. Outcome selection by principals	
2. Form peer evaluation teams	At least 1 peer evaluation for each school
3. Interim evaluation	Workshops, meetings, visitations, and newsletters
4. Information exchange	
B. Home/School Support	Parent Power booklet
1. Parent information	Parent pamphlets
2. Newsletters	2 parent information programs
3. Parent/school board communications	Parent advisory council meeting 10 each school
	Newsletters, posters, parent meetings, visits
C. Diffusion and Network Building	SICC meetings, conference, workshops
1. Inter-league communication	1 clinical, P/UL meeting
2. SICC (State IGE Coordinating Council)	
3. Awareness conferences	
4. In-service for new schools	

IGE (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
E. Monitoring and Evaluation of IGE - Evaluation of Instructional Programming Model	Criteria check list
	At least 3 interim meetings with schools
1. Formulate criteria for selection of schools to be evaluated	Evaluation report
	I/D/E/A/ questionnaire
2. Select 3 project schools	Implement Jensen/Armstrong evaluation model
3. Administer I/D/E/A/ questionnaire	4 field visits per school
4. Interim formative evaluation	
5. Final evaluation	
F. Planning Projects	Report of integration potential
1. IGE/766	Design for alternative organizations
2. IGE/alternative public education	

INFORMATION SERVICES

DESCRIPTION

Information needs of client teachers and administrators are identified through needs assessment procedures. Using its resource information banks, MEC responds to information requests by targeting specific documents (in microfiche and/or hard copy) according to the expressed needs. Utilization of knowledge and theory-into-practice are augmented by MEC staff, field agents, and locally identified gatekeepers and educational information consultants.

Subscription information to the MEC Resource Information Services includes microfiche readers, Research in Education catalogues, and a basic library of microfiche selected from over 95,000 available titles.

In addition, the Center provides the hard copy reproduction of ERIC documents at the prevailing prices as indicated in Research in Education.

LINKAGES - (Boards and Agencies)

- National Institute of Education
- 16 Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouses
- 25 Information Centers Nationally
- Association for Individually Guided Education (IGE) Clearinghouse Project
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- University of Michigan - Center for Research on the Utilization of Scientific Knowledge (CRUSK)

BUDGET

Budget Allocation: $40,206.49*

Support: Local Funds: 70%
Grant Related: 30%

* Fiscal Year 1973-74

INFORMATION SERVICES
1974-75

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Delivery Sub-Systems

1. Distribute educational research
2. Identify and train information representatives in local communities
3. Link with Career Education (ASCOE); IGE/HUB, etc.
4. Develop awareness and promotional materials
5. Assist users with technology of the system

B. Acquisitions

1. Maintain liaison with national clearinghouse networks (ERIC; ASIS, AIGE)
2. Identify services through planned acquisition and screening for relevance

OUTCOMES

RIE's distributed to all communities

200 microfiche per community (at least)

10% of educators receive "Introduction to ERIC"

1.5% receive instruction in "How to Use ERIC"

Promotional literature (newsletters; brochures)

On-site visits at request of client

Prepare bibliographies (50 additional ones)

Prepare indexes to files (ASCD, etc.)

Current awareness information and selective dissemination of information (6 to 8 new micropaks)

Packages of information on selected high need areas (25 to 30)

INFORMATION SERVICES (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
3. Update indexes to all systems for distribution to all communities	
4. Organize materials and indexes to all files for accessibility	
5. Develop micropack and SDI materials	
C. Maintain Operational Aspects	100 computer searches
1. Replication of documents (mf to hc; hc to mf)	
2. Perform manual and computer searches	
3. Inventory and order supplies	
4. Maintain addressograph files	

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MICROFICHE UTILIZATION
1973 - 1974
(SCHOOL CALENDAR YEAR)

Community	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Totals
Andover	4	161	98	29	170	17	20	21	25	1	-	14	560
Bedford	7	13	63	-	-	82	30	11	9	3	1	-	219
Billerica	-	20	12	9	1	-	13	20	19	-	110	-	204
Carlisle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chelmsford	5	36	17	20	-	20	2	28	5	3	-	-	136
Fitchburg/McKay	100	-	-	-	8	2	7	3	-	45	-	-	165
Greater Lowell	-	16	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	-	16
Groton/Dunstable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lawrence	77	28	48	12	86	4	24	12	28	27	-	13	359
Littleton	-	-	116	-	58	9	6	-	36	-	-	-	225
Lunenburg	-	-	13	-	-	-	-	5	7	-	-	-	25
Methuen	-	-	23	-	3	10	32	21	11	10	-	-	110
Nashoba Tech.	32	123	27	-	9	7	114	24	-	-	-	-	336
No. Andover	-	14	-	3	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	20
No. Middlesex	-	2	21	3	32	1	-	-	-	6	-	-	65
Shawsheen Valley Voc.	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	6
Tewksbury	6	29	-	-	3	5	23	-	1	41	12	5	125
Tyngsboro	-	-	-	1	-	5	2	13	-	12	-	-	33
Westford	-	20	7	25	8	6	7	6	-	4	-	-	83
Wilmington	41	-	24	11	60	51	25	8	-	117	47	-	384
Woburn	-	7	14	17	10	3	-	18	3	-	-	-	72
External	123	44	106	67	228	137	98	80	205	46	16	54	1204
Fitchburg-Career Ed.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Copy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	8	22	29	4	117
In-House	57	120	425	7	37	32	57	327	219	313	57	1	1652
Central Mass. League	1	4	16	14	1	-	17	-	-	9	-	-	62
Northeast League	-	-	-	-	-	26	-	-	3	-	-	1	30
Southeast League	-	-	-	-	202	-	-	-	3	15	-	-	220
MEC Curriculum Exc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	3	-	7	5	44	69
Project ASCOE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Development	2	150	4	2	-	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	171
	460	787	1034	220	917	417	499	657	582	691	278	136	6668

Number of Titles Requested

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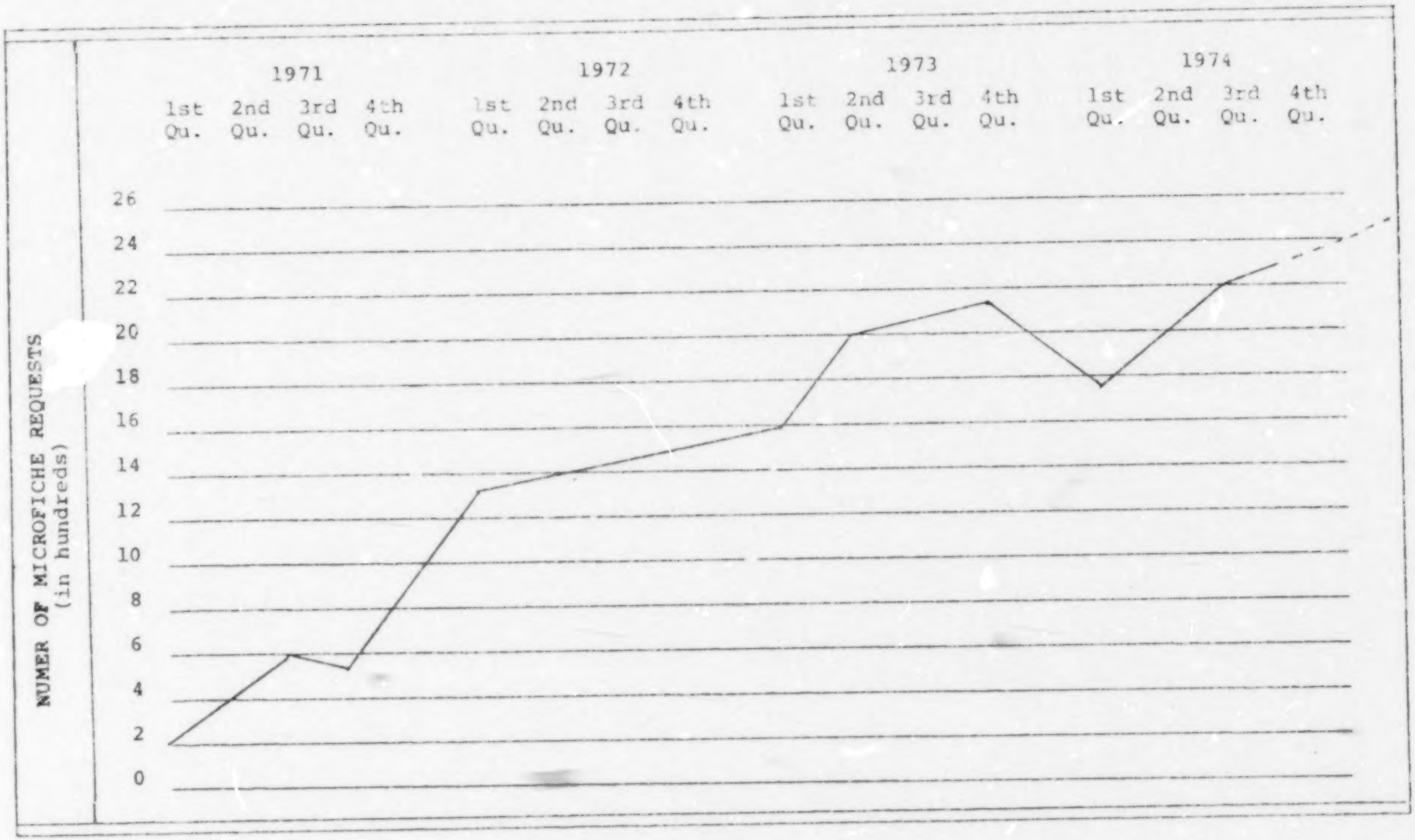
NUMBER OF MICROFICHE REQUESTS



PROJECT ASCOE

ALTERNATIVES FOR STUDENTS IN CAREER AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

Project ASCOE is a program to develop the occupational competence of high school students in the 20 towns which support the Merrimack Education Center. Through a network of participating schools, colleges, and regional agencies and organizations, collaborative efforts will be established for teacher training, resource coordination, information exchange, and linking of program activities and outcomes into ongoing successful programs.

Secondary school faculties will be trained to provide general education and other students with the experience they need to develop their occupational competencies.

LINKAGES - (Boards and Agencies)

- Advisory Board - representatives from industry, commerce, education and business
- Planning Board - core team representation from local schools
- Steering Committee - superintendents of vocational schools

BUDGET

Budget Allocation: $79,685

Support: 100% ESEA III State

PROJECT ASCOE
1974-75

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
A. Regional Manpower Assessment	Summary report
1. Short range	Advisory Board
2. Long Range	
B. Program Development	20 core teams
1. Establish core teams	3-day residential program
2. Implement in-service programs	5 network meetings
3. Provide consultant support	5 planning meetings
4. Exchange resources	90 field visits
5. Implement student programs	Identify 20 SEP's
6. Develop work placement options	Link with FSC
7. Occupational exploration	Program plan for each core team and pilot program in minimum of 10 classrooms
	Pilot program in minimum of 4 classrooms
	2 video tapes

PROJECT ASCOE (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
C. Dissemination	
1. Information exchange	2 awareness conferences
	4 newsletters
2. Information delivery	4 newspaper articles
	4 information packets
3. Information awareness	Occupational education bibliography
	Minimum 100 microfiche delivered to each core team
	Slide/tape program on project ASCOE
D. Evaluation	
1. Collect base line data	Needs assessment report including data from all core teams
2. Monitor project activities	Formative and summative reports from evaluator
3. To determine increase in high school students' knowledge of various occupations	Increase in level of students' occupational awareness

SPECIAL NEEDS TRAINING-PROJECT SPAN
SPECIAL PROGRAMS ACCORDING TO NEEDS

DESCRIPTION

This proposal provides a collaborative linkage and support system for delivery of training programs in special education. These training programs are primarily aimed at increasing capabilities of regular classroom teachers and public school administrators for integration of exceptional students.

Project staff will carry out the goals through four major objectives: (a) to identify training needs of local schools through an assessment process; (b) to inventory successful training practices in special needs for application of in-service education; (c) to develop gaming and simulation training materials in selected high need areas; and, (d) to implement training sessions through a college-community collaborative model.

Training efforts utilize materials developed, tested and proven effective in national R&D efforts. Additionally, the development of twelve games for simulation experiences will enhance the training programs. New items to be designed will also include trainers' manuals and resource guides for the inventory of successful training practices.

The benefits of the proposed activities take the forms of high impact on target population, the development of improved in-service dissemination models, commitment for continued support from local school systems, and cost-effectiveness.

LINKAGES - (Boards and Agencies)

- Minnesota University
- Texas Education Service Center - Austin
- Fitchburg State College
- State Department of Education
- Project Advisory Board

BUDGET

Budget Allocation: $83,150

Support: 100% EPDA (Educational Professions Development Act)

EPDA PROJECT SPAN
1974-75

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
A. Survey of Needs in Special Education	18 priority topics
1. Administer in Northeast and MEC	
2. Consult with Advisory Board; determine priorities	
3. Match needs/resources; determine developmental effort	
B. Identify Resources Available	1 resource manual
1. Identify successful projects	3-6 practices
2. Query projects and select training packages	
3. Identify training instructors and field agents	
4. Prepare directory of resource materials	
5. Transform and customize resources	

EPDA PROJECT SPAN (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
C. Develop Simulation Materials	12 simulations
1. Priority areas where materials are needed	
2. Establish exercise (simulation) writing teams	
3. Conduct training session for writing teams	
4. Design 12 prototype games and field test	
5. Produce necessary debriefing work-sheets for aggregate dissemination	
D. Field Agents Provide Marketing	10 trainers
1. Prepare catalogue or index of program offerings	40 sessions
2. Organize training workshops (40) for each system (customize)	
3. Training for field agents	
4. Awareness, overview sessions and schedule visits	
5. Overview for emerging collaboration	

EPDA PROJECT SPAN (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
E. Offer Graduate Programs (40) in School Districts	5 field agents
	50 visitations
1. Selected training packages (2-5) transformed	
2. 12 simulation packages field tested	
3. 15-20 programs in "course catalogue"	
F. Evaluation	
1. Case study	
2. Final report	

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM AREAS

MERRIMACK AUDIO-VISUAL COOPERATIVE

Four towns, Bedford, Billerica, Methuen and Wilmington have formed an audio-visual cooperative with the help of Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials Cooperative (MASBO/Co-Op, Inc.), an affiliate of the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials. The new audio-visual cooperative is receiving assistance from Western Electric Company in designing inventory systems and from Northeastern University in drawing up audio-visual purchasing specifications. After a three-month study of these areas has been completed, the Merrimack Education Center will share the findings with the remainder of its 20 participating school systems. If these findings indicate that an Audio-Visual (A/V) Cooperative can save its members money while at the same time improving the quality of the A/V programs, the Cooperative will be enlarged to include any additional towns who wish to join. Task forces are presently working on improved purchasing specifications, inventory procedures/ control, and maintenance procedures.

SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE PRODUCTS

A new venture for MEC is to support and assist adoption/adaptation of validated educational products through in-service training. This in-service training component is designed to respond to needs of administrators and teachers for customizing local on-site training. Its major objective is the diffusion of validated educational programs which are responsive to the local system's identified needs. Examples of these validated programs, tested and proven successful nationally, include: Erntspiel; Center for the Study of Evaluation Workshops; Phi Delta Kappan Educational goals and objectives; The Problem Solving School. The focus is on relevant and workable solution alternatives applied directly to school problems and occurring on school sites where the problems exist.

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION AND COLLABORATION

The first phases of the Governor's Commission on collaboration have culminated in a report to be produced by the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education. Dr. Lavin has served on the Commission over a two-year period and will be continuing this involvement as recommendations are finalized and implemented. The Merrimack Education Center has contributed to the work of the Commission by submitting a publication entitled "Organizing for Improving Delivery of Educational Services in Massachusetts"-- a study in two volumes. Copies of these publications are available from MACE for any interested superintendent.

EVALUATION OF LOCAL PROGRAMS

MEC performs evaluations for local community programs such as Title VI projects. Billerica and Woburn have taken advantage of this service in the past two years. Title VI evaluations have also been performed for Tewksbury, Methuen, and Wilmington in previous years. MEC uses program area consultants for evaluation.

MINI-SCHOOL

The mini-school is an effort by the four towns of Chelmsford, Billerica, Tewksbury, and Westford to form a jointly operated school to service older children who have been diagnosed as emotionally disturbed. The mini-school is presently housed at the Christian Formation Center in Andover. Children who are eligible for attendance at the mini-school are those who qualify under the requirements of Chapter 750; referrals are made by the local school districts on the basis of a recommendation from the local Core Evaluation Team. The school is financed by a state grant of some $50,000 on the basis of $288.60 per month for each approved student. The individual communities provide transportation and also absorb the rental cost of $400 per month. Merrimack Education Center, and the Chelmsford Public Schools, serve as the conduits for the fiscal arrangements.

THE SEARS FOUNDATION GRANT

The Sears Roebuck Foundation project works cooperatively with the University of Wisconsin Research and Development Center to establish Individually Guided Education (IGE) Networks nationally. To date, there are fourteen states in the national network. The Sears-Roebuck Foundation award is for developing IGE teacher education materials and to enable teacher education institutions to assist in starting, maintaining, and strengthening IGE/Multi-Unit Schools. In Massachusetts, the network plans programs to help build awareness of IGE in teacher education and provide for in-service programs. The four IGE Leagues in Massachusetts are linked into the State network through the State Coordinating Council.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The annual Needs Assessment program furnishes basic information on needs for all Center programs. A questionnaire, distributed to every teacher, administrator and school board member throughout the region, elicits information of two types. First, it asks respondents to rate the extent of their familiarity with over sixty

educational topics and the extent of their interest in the topic. Secbnd, it asks the extent of their familiarity with 11 products and services offered by MEC and the extent to which they need assistance in obtaining these. The results of these surveys are used in several ways. First, in response to a finding that awareness of Center services and products is low, newsletters are instituted and distributed to all educators in the region. Second, in-service courses are designed in response to educational topics which are highly rated by a sizeable number of respondents; this activity is carried out under the direction of the Staff Development program area.

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PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITIES 1973 - 1974 (Sept) (Aug)	IGE Membership	Staff Development	Needs Assessment	ERIC Subscribers	*Occupational Competency Project	Special Needs Project	MEC Programs
ANDOVER	X	X	X	X	X	4	1,4
BEDFORD		X	X	X	X		5
BILLERICA		X	X	X	X	4	2,4,5
CARLISLE		X	X	X			
CHELMSFORD	X	X	X	X	X		1,2,3
GROTON/DUNSTABLE	X	X	X				
LAWRENCE	X	X	X	X	X	4	1,2,4
LITTLETON	X	X	X	X	X		
LUNENBURG	X	X	X		X		1
METHUEN	X	X	X	X	X		5
NO. ANDOVER		X	X	X	X		
NO. MIDDLESEX		X	X	X			
TEWKSBURY	X	X	X	X		4	4
TYNGSBORO		X	X	X	X		
WESTFORD	X	X	X	X	X	4	1,4
WILMINGTON	X	X	X	X	X		5
WOBURN	X	X	X	X	X		1,2,3
LAWRENCE REGIONAL		X	X		X		
LOWELL REGIONAL		X	X				
NASHOBA VALLEY		X	X	X	X		
SHAWSHEEN VALLEY		X	X		X		
FITCHBURG STATE	X			X	X		2,3

Key

1 - Management Studies Proposed

2 - Evaluation/Consulting

3 - Secondary School or Middle School Projects

4 - Principals' Training Program

5 - Audio-Visual Cooperative

*Includes 3 Private Schools

The back, outside cover of this report depicts the Merrimack region. The map indicates the geographical area in Northeastern Massachusetts comprised of twenty contiguous cities and towns served by MEC. The Town of Chelmsford serves as the local education agency.

The MEC region includes urban, suburban and rural areas. Some communities have a city form of government, while others have the traditional New England town government structure. Still others have an intermediate form of representative government. Lawrence is the primary urban area, while districts in the western part of the region are primarily rural. Residents in the surburan towns include a large number of people who either commute to Boston or who are employed in the electronics industries which dot Route 128 and the newer Interstate Route 495 which encircles Boston. With industry springing up, and with open land available, the Merrimack Valley is a growing region even as the population of Massachusetts as a whole is declining.

The vast majority of students in the region attend the public schools serviced by the Center. Each of the school districts, including the several regional vocational and technical high schools, is within twenty to twenty-five minutes (driving time) of the Merrimack Education Center. The collaborating communities enroll over 85,000 students and employ over 7,500 professional educators in an area of Massachusetts with well over 500,000 people. There are 150 elementary buildings in the district, 20 junior or middle school buildings, and 20 high schools 16 of which are comprehensive and four of which are vocational/technical schools.

As indicated by the Organizational Chart, the Executive Board of the Merrimack Education Center performs the governance functions. MEC has prepared, under separate cover, a Case Study of the Center's Operation. This booklet is an attempt to provide program plans and efforts underway to integrate all program objectives and optimize results of the organization for providing more effective services to schools.

INFORMATION REQUEST BLANK

return to: Merrimack Education Center
101 Mill Road
Chelmsford, Massachusetts 01824

Telephone: (617) 256-3985

_____ Please place my name of the Center's mailing list

_____ Note this change in my mailing address _____

Indicate any projects, products, or services of the Center for which you would like more detailed information.

_____ Case Study of the Merrimack Education Center

_____ Organizing for Improving Delivery of Educational Services in Massachusetts
A Process Approach to the Development of Regional Educational Delivery Systems in Massachusetts

_____ Synthesis of Knowledge and Practice in Educational Management and Leadership

_____ Evaluation of Merrimack Education Center's Project League (IGE Schools)

_____ Introduction of the IGE/MUS Model in Selected Elementary Schools

_____ An Innovative Approach to Public School Staff Development

_____ Establishing Effective Linkages of the Local Education Agency Level

_____ Needs Assessment: A First Step

_____ Overview Information on Individually Guided Education

_____ Information on the ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center)

_____ Staff Development Brochure of In-Service Courses

_____ Educational Management Development Centers

_____ Career Education (Project ASCOE)

_____ Special Education (Project SPAN)

_____ Sears Foundation Grant to the State IGE Coordinating Council

_____ Merrimack Audiovisual Cooperative

_____ Center Evaluation Services

If you indicate the appropriate category below, it will help us with our mailing lists:

Teacher___	College Faculty ___	Parent ___
Principal___	Superintendent ___	School Committee ___
Curriculum Coordinator ___	Assist. Superintendent ___	Journalist ___
Community Worker ___	Student ___	

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

_____

State Zip

I would also like information on the following topic: _____

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About MEC

. . . was established in 1968, MEC is a public, multi-purpose collaborative of 20 Massachusetts communities.

. . . implements Individually Guided Education in leagues of participating schools.

. . . acts as an educational "broker" linking the school districts with resources at the local, state, and national levels.

. . . conducts annual needs assessment for member districts.

. . . designs and tests new ways to improve school management structures and to improve methods for developing skills of leadership-management personnel.

. . . cooperates with Fitchburg State College in pre-service and in-service education programs.

. . . serves as an educational information center and provides computerized searches of the ERIC Data Base.

. . . assists local schools in the planning and evaluation of programs.

. . . Serves over 90,000 pupils, over 7,500 teachers and administrators, and over 100 school committeemen in a region where over $50 millions annually are devoted to education.